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ABSTRACT

Interim programs at nine colleges are described. An introductory essay by Lee M. Swan, "The Interim: Potential for Quality Learning," emphasizes the potential for unique learning through the interim approach. At Augustana College (South Dakota), interim experiences are required, including core courses, internships, travel experiences, and programs on a chosen theme. Buena Vista College (Iowa) also requires freshmen to attend a humanities interim course emphasizing writing, speaking, and critical thinking skills in the context of Western classics. Colby College's (Maine) January Program has involved students in both directed research and independent study. A cluster course concept followed at Illinois Wesleyan University only requires two or three faculty members willing to work together around a common concept. Winter Term at Linfield College (Oregon) includes regular and special courses, internships, and practicums. McMurry College (Texas) offers nontraditional courses during the summer on a voluntary basis. The interim at Pacific Lutheran University (Washington) is devoted to intense study of one topic and may involve a journal, case study, or oral presentation. At Rollins College (Florida), completion of three Winter Terms is required for graduation. Finally, Samford University's (Alabama) January Term, which focuses on the liberal arts approach to professional education, enrolls law students and business majors as well as arts and sciences majors and has included trips to study foreign countries. (SW)

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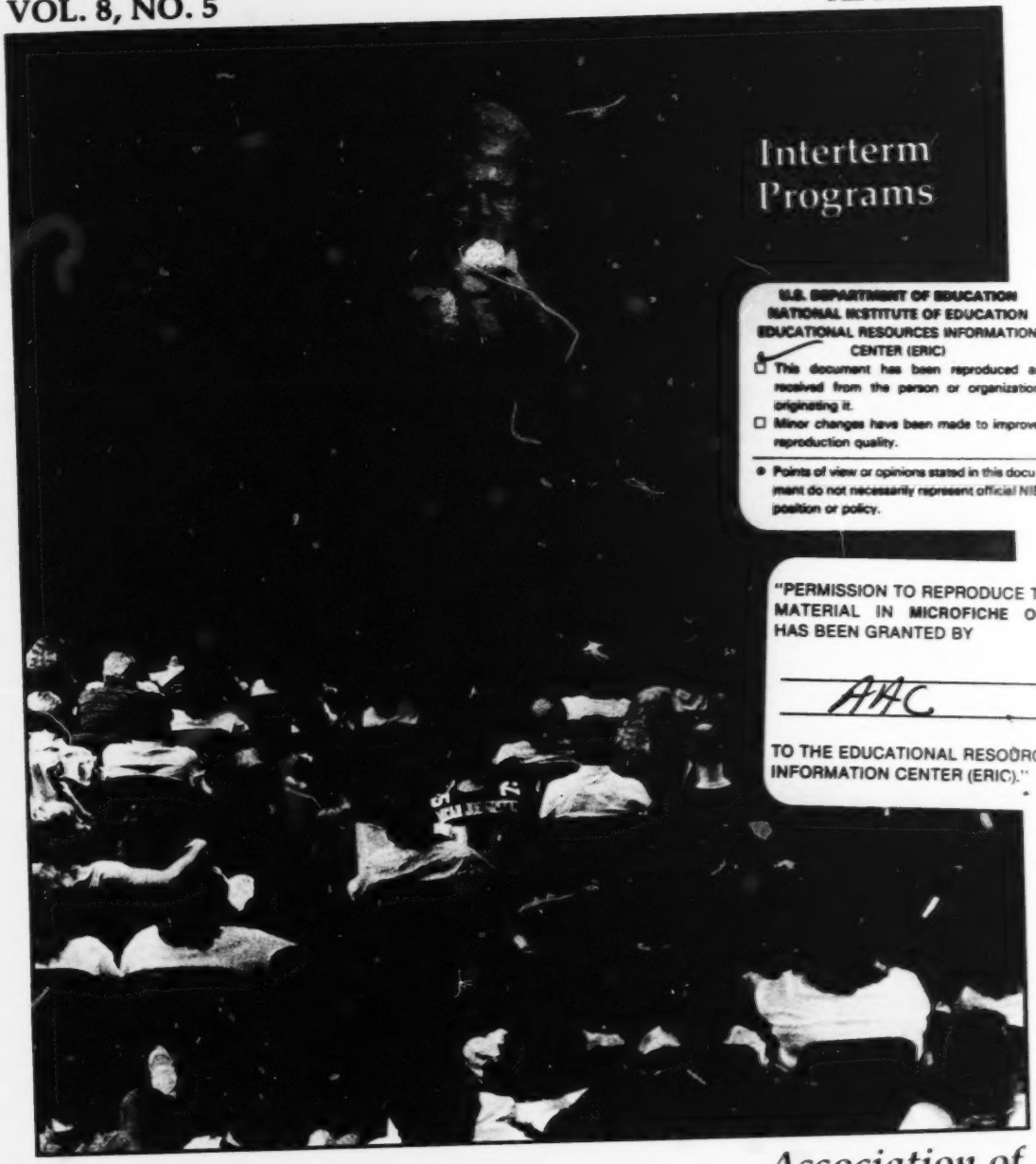

Interterm Programs

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Buena Vista College

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In Praise of Single-mindedness

One spring quarter during graduate school, I took a seminar titled simply "Henry James." As I soaked up a student's tan, I soaked up those books: my own writing became especially convoluted, I began to plan my first trip to England, I quoted Lambert Strether at every opportunity, and it took me at least six months to drop "hanging fire" from my speech.

Unfortunately I was taking two other courses at the time and writing a thesis on an unrelated subject, so my indulgence was not so complete as I would have liked, nor is my memory of those novels what it should be. I've reread *The Golden Bowl* since, and dipped into *The Portrait of a Lady*, but never returned to the master as I had promised myself I would.

Lee Swan, in his essay below, notes the evidence that "those schools that have an effective interim are the ones that focus on the inherent opportunities and advantages of taking one course for one month." Would I—could I—have so willingly soaked up that canon in a month of doing nothing else, meeting in the seminar, say, for ten hours per week instead of three? I think I would have said "yes!" then; in retrospect I certainly say it.

The ideal of the interim—a single-minded pursuit of knowledge, an intellectual indulgence—has not, as Swan notes, been realized in all programs. For many schools, however, it continues to be a shaping ideal. —*S.L.-R.*

The Interim: Potential for Quality Learning

Lee M. Swan
Associate Dean for Academic Programs
St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota

The 1985-86 academic year can be considered the 25th anniversary of the January interim calendar, or 4-1-4, in American higher education. Indeed the concept is relatively new compared to traditional academic calendars.

What have we learned about the interim calendar and its management in these 25 years? Has it been a positive host to quality liberal arts education? Why has it become less popular in recent years? What can experience with the January interim teach us about implementing other special interterm calendars?

Although there were sporadic academic calendar modifications prior to the 1960s that included some kind of short term, Eckerd College can be considered the first adopter of the 4-1-4 calendar through its initiation of a January Interim in 1961.[1] A number of other private liberal arts colleges studied the 4-1-4 option about the same time and a few adopted it in the early 1960s. The concept blossomed most visibly during the six-year period of 1967–72 with approximately 100 colleges joining the movement;[2] clearly, there was great enthusiasm about the innovation in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

In the 1980s we have seen a substantial reduction in the number of colleges with an interim calendar. Using two national publications,[3] I identified 201 higher education institutions with January-term calendars in academic year 1981–82 and sent them a questionnaire. The responses revealed that 46 colleges in this pool had dropped their January term, most of them since the late 1970s. A 1984 follow-up survey of the remaining 155 colleges showed that an additional 21 had dropped the interim or disbanded it, with 12 more saying there was a strong chance of such action.

At present, there are 112 liberal arts colleges and universities with a January interim of at least three weeks in length, a criterion I use to define a 4-1-4 school; an additional 21 schools have a January term of less than three weeks. I predict that by the end of this decade the 4-1-4 calendar will be used at about 100 liberal arts colleges and will stabilize at that figure before a possible resurgence in the late 1990s.

Misplaced emphasis on innovation

Why has there been such a large decrease in use of the 4-1-4 calendar? What went wrong?

Generalizations can mislead, especially when one is aware of the diversity of educational institutions that adopted an interim and the variety of policies that govern such a term. An interim calendar in the late 1960s made good press; some schools saw this as a way of creating interest when all indicators pointed to serious problems or retrenchment. For a few, the educational rationale in adopting an interim calendar was either nonexistent or given little thought. Others were caught up in the so-called innovative curricular changes of the time, and the interim seemed to be especially receptive to fostering such goals. Yet other schools saw the one-month mid-year as a way of accomplishing important educational objectives within the mission of a liberal arts institution.

The crucial dimension of the interim calendar is 'single-mindedness' for professor and student.

In an article I wrote in AAC's *Liberal Education* in 1981, I hypothesized that the interim calendar concept's staying power was vulnerable because of two factors: academic mismanagement of the interim, and the impact of financial/enrollment constraints of the 1980s and 1990s.[4] My subsequent research tends to confirm these speculations.

In some cases there was misinterpretation of what was innovative about the interim that led to dissatisfaction with the new calendar. Many of the schools that have dropped the interim indicate, for example, that all grades were pass/fail and normal evaluation systems were neglected in the interim, that only elective courses or a preponderance of courses not normally considered appropriate within traditional liberal arts disciplines were taught in the interim, or that most students were enrolled in independent study or experimental education courses. Other respondents noted that normal departmental and peer review procedures for course approval were abandoned for interim courses, or that the interim was an optional term, or that traditional staffing and faculty personnel policies were not followed in the interim. While some of the 4-1-4 schools have corrected these practices, many found the negative perceptions of the interim too difficult to overcome and merely adopted another calendar.

The potential of the interim calendar as a positive environment for unique and significant learning in the liberal arts college is great.

For schools with financial difficulties, an interim calendar is not attractive. A third term, when compared with the traditional two semesters, requires an additional registration, bulletin, more bookkeeping, and so forth. The interim is thus seen as an inefficient calendar especially where there are already enrollment problems and/or where a low percentage of students attend the interim.

What have we learned?

There seems to be abundant evidence that those schools that have an effective interim are the ones that focus on the inherent opportunities and advantages of taking one course for one month. The crucial dimension of the interim calendar is "single-mindedness" for professor and student.

An interim instructional program can contribute in a unique way to the liberal learning outcomes higher education desires for its students as well as supplement normal academic achievement. How? The reader will find some answers in this issue of *Forum*, but let me explore just a few examples.

The interim course may be defined in traditional disciplinary content objectives, but taught in a physical loca-

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[1] I define the interim as a three-week period of study or longer (preferably four weeks) in mid-year of the academic calendar. Statistics on the number of 4-1-4 schools will vary with those published by the American Association of Registrars because of differences of definition and my focus on undergraduate liberal arts institutions.

[2] "The January Term Calendar in U.S. Liberal Arts Colleges," unpublished report on research conducted by Lee M. Swan, October 1984.

[3] *1981–82 Accredited Institutions of Postsecondary Education*, American Council on Education, Washington, DC.

List of School Openings and Other Dates: 1981–82 School Year, National Association of College Stores, Oberlin, OH.

[4] Swan, Lee M. "The Interim: Academic Strength Through Uniqueness." *Liberal Education* 67 (Winter 1981): 304-309.

tion (not possible in the semester format) that confronts the student with visual and experiential realities and raises significant value questions. Or the interim program may be structured in a way that focuses the attention of the entire learning community on a common theme; each discipline speaks to this theme singly through the course taught and also in dialogue through cross-disciplinary seminars of students and faculty. A data bank in biology may be accumulated and expanded each year through field research by advanced students working with a faculty member in the specific problem area. Or courses may be developed that introduce students to other cultures and cross-cultural issues that are impossible to study on campus.

It can be argued that the above examples and others could be addressed within the traditional semester or quarter format. The experience of dealing with conflicting class schedules, class hours spread over four months, and related logistical problems will convince most readers, however, that the traditional calendar is not hospitable to such innovative pedagogy and content focus. Finally, contemporary course topics appropriate within liberal arts disciplines are often neglected by regular semester courses.

The potential of the interim calendar as a positive environment for unique and significant learning in the liberal arts college is great. It is time for 4-1-4 schools to carefully analyze their interim, especially policies and practices that assure quality learning.

Augustana College

Interim for faculty and students

Interim at Augustana College is viewed by students and faculty alike as "an important and special time," says the College's Dean of Academic Services Gary D. Olson. In addition to providing students with time to study deeply or try something new, Augustana's Interim is an important element in the college's faculty development program.

Enrollment in Interim is required, and fees are included with those for the fall semester. The Interim program at this Sioux Falls, SD, school of 1,900 students began in 1971. Since then, it has been subjected to regular scrutiny; last year, as part of a three-year review and revision of Augustana's general education requirements, faculty and students were polled and, says Olson, their response was overwhelmingly in favor of retaining Interim.

Augustana's Interim offerings include core courses, internships, travel experiences, and courses and programs that develop a chosen theme. Core courses may be standards, like "World Literature," or variants that fulfill the core requirements, such as "World Drama." A number of students, Olson notes, use Interim to begin learning a language and then continue their studies immediately in the spring semester.

Internship opportunities during Interim are important at this private liberal arts college, which offers both professional and preprofessional programs. Overseas travel during the Interim does not attract the number of students it once did, Olson explains, because Augustana's students— who come primarily from South Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa—have been hit hard by the economic crisis in farming. Nevertheless, about 30-35 students go abroad each Interim on study tours led by professors from schools in a midwestern consortium.

Each Interim, one-third of the Augustana faculty is eligible to apply for leave under the school's faculty development program.

For the last several years, each Interim's offerings have included courses and programs designed around a theme selected a year in advance by an academic committee from suggestions offered by the entire college community. This has had mixed results. The most effective themes, Olson points out, are those that involve issues that are important to a large segment of the campus community. This year's theme, "Celebrating Our Heritage: Unfolding Frontiers," was less successful than others, he reports. Even though it was linked to a celebration of Augustana's 125th anniversary, there was no "real issue." The theme for next year, "Changing Technologies—Changing Values?" will focus on "the issue of how technology changes our society, not only in how we live but in the values that we hold." The topic was chosen, in large part, to coincide with an anticipated expansion of Augustana's own computer system.

Faculty's use of Interim

For faculty members, Interim offers a choice of opportunities. First, according to Olson, there is the chance to try something different in the classroom. There is also an opportunity for faculty to take an Interim leave. Each Interim, one-third of the Augustana faculty is eligible to apply for leave under the school's faculty development program. Faculty leaves are not taken for granted, Olson

explains, and are allowed on the basis of proposals that faculty members submit to a review committee. Leaves are granted for research and writing, curricula development, and projects that will benefit a department or the college. One professor in business, for example, used this past Interim to finish setting up a computer laboratory so that it would be available to students on the first day of the new semester.

One of the key ingredients for the success of Augustana's Interim, Olson believes, is that both faculty and students have input. While department chairpersons gather course proposals one year ahead of time from faculty members and bring them to the Interim committee, students may suggest courses too. Last year, 100 students petitioned for a course in personal finance, and this year it was offered. "At Augustana," Olson says, "Interim belongs to the students *and* faculty." —*S.L.-R.*

For more information, contact Gary D. Olson, Dean of Academic Services; Augustana College; 29th Street and South Summit; Sioux Falls, SD 57197 (605/336-4113).

Buena Vista College

Interim draws together freshmen

Buena Vista College officials added the Freshman Humanities Core Program to their January Interim curriculum in 1982 to provide first-year students with a grounding in the humanities through a shared learning experience.

Associate Dean of Faculty Sandra Madsen considers the interim slot an ideal time to require the humanities course of Buena Vista's 200-plus freshmen. Because the college offers a large number of programs (in business, communication arts, education, social science, and natural science), she explains, it is difficult to find sufficient staffing to accommodate the entire freshman class in this type of "massive, joint course" during the regular semester. Another factor hinges on the nature of rigidly structured programs, such as teacher education, in which students have little or no room for deviation in course registration. In addition, Madsen notes that since most first-year students are not yet committed to a major field, they feel free to spend the interim in the coordinated humanities core.

Buena Vista's decision to require the humanities interim course is linked to a concerted faculty effort to offset the "smorgasbord approach" to general education course selection begun in the late 1960s at many American colleges and universities. Addressing two particular concerns—the "dilution" of humanities requirements and

Buena Vista's decision to require the humanities interim course is linked to a concerted faculty effort to offset the 'smorgasbord approach' to general education course selection.

increasing enrollment of career-oriented students—a faculty committee proposed the humanities core to enhance the role of the liberal arts, and specifically, the humanities component of the college's curriculum. The program was designed so that freshmen could participate in a common learning situation—an element lacking up to that time in Buena Vista's curriculum.

Emphasis on fundamentals

While the program's format has undergone several revisions since its inception, the Freshman Humanities Core continues to emphasize such fundamentals as writing, speaking, and critical thinking skills in the context of Western classics. "Originally, the core was conducted as separate units only roughly organized around a theme," says Madsen, "and each faculty member addressed the issue in the manner appropriate to his or her particular discipline." Emphasizing a cross-disciplinary perspective, the core allowed students to spend the interim in six different sections focusing on the academic area of each instructor.

Some of the individual sections offered under the auspices of the 1982 core theme, "The Decade of the '30s," included "Radicals and Reactionaries in America During the Great Depression," "American Art and Social Realism," "The Christian Church in a Decade of Promise and Despair," and "Nature and Naturalism: The Land and Literature."

The following year (1983), noting that students had been allowed to approach their studies somewhat superficially the year before, administrators reduced students' exposure to three faculty members' sections. But again, says Madsen, "we felt there was a lack of integration."

Consequently, the humanities core format was amended in 1984 for the third and final time to embrace not only a common theme, but a common syllabus, readings, and outside films as well.

Students in the 1985 program debated values inherent in a study of the implications of war in "War and Conscience: Justice, Freedom, Equality." Faculty participants

chose Elie Wiesel's *Dawn* as the required text; other selections, such as Fyodor Dostoyevski's *The Brothers Karamazov*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *The Social Contract*, and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *Letter from Birmingham City Jail*, were studied on the model of the Aspen Institute Program.

For two and one-half hours each day, five days a week, students meet with a faculty member in groups of about 17. Although no tests are administered in the humanities core, faculty participants agree to emphasize writing and speaking skills by requiring students to keep a daily journal and write several position papers each week, as well as frequently take a verbal stand on relevant class issues.

In the 1985 Interim, the first week's class discussions focused on questions of justice in relation to the U.S. internment of Japanese-Americans and the Nazi war trials of World War II. During the second week, students examined the notion of freedom in the context of the draft and protests against the Vietnam War. The topic of unrest in the Mideast and Central and South America was on the third week's agenda: a discussion of the ideal of equality relevant to these conflicts and the continued U.S. military dependence on registration for the draft.

Speakers invited to share their perspectives during the 1985 Interim included a Japanese-American interned in the U.S. during World War II, an Iowa student who refused to register for the draft, and the commandant of cadets at West Point, General Peter J. Boylan, Jr.

While the Interim humanities core instructors have alternated between evaluating students on an "A" through "F" grading scale and on a pass/fail basis, they agreed this year to adopt the latter as the official grading system in future January sessions. Madsen attributes this to the ease of standardizing expectations and grading scales among the 10 to 12 instructors. Additionally, she notes that a pass/fail grading system signals that "we want freshmen to consider learning fun; we don't want them to feel that a required course experience is going to adversely affect their grade point average."

Summer workshop prepares core faculty

The humanities core faculty participants attend a three-day workshop each August in preparation for the following interim's program. According to Madsen, an appropriate outside resource person, depending upon the theme and development of the core, is brought in to address specific issues for the faculty.

In anticipation of the 1986 bioethics theme, program coordinators brought in a woman from Canada's Westminster Institute for Ethics and Human Values. For two days, she discussed pertinent bioethical issues, as well as teaching techniques and relevant case studies. Faculty participants spent the third day learning how to teach the humanities readings themselves, notes Madsen.

"Our intent at this point is to develop four themes that will then be rotated," Madsen says. Within a couple of years, she hopes to have four faculty-member groups trained in teaching one of the core themes.

Noting a problem that arose during the first program in 1982, Madsen points to a "hostile" attitude displayed by student participants. "They would sit in class with their arms crossed and dare us to teach them anything. They were told that we had this wonderful 4-1-4 opportunity where everybody would have great freedom of choice and flexibility, and suddenly, they found themselves locked in where the other students were not." While this attitude has changed in subsequent years, says Madsen, "there is still a little bit of the sense that freshmen are working harder than upperclass students" who have the freedom to choose among on-campus courses, independent study, internships, and travel-study courses.

In addition to accomplishing the stated goals of the course, Madsen feels the Freshman Humanities Core Program advertises to students that Buena Vista emphasizes writing, speaking, and analytical skills in all courses. It tells them that "we're going to force them to develop those skills to the highest degree possible, and to use those skills not only in the freshman core, but in each course thereafter." —*L.M.N*

For more information, contact Sandra Madsen, Associate Dean of Faculty; Buena Vista College; Storm Lake, IA 50588 (712/749-2205).

Colby College

The January Program: A 25-year track record

Administrators at Colby College in Waterville, ME, have found diversity to be the key to survival for one of the longest running winter-term programs in this country.

First offered in 1961, Colby's January Program has remained flexible and hence viable in the face of a changing curriculum, says Robert McArthur, vice president for academic affairs and dean of faculty.

Remarking on the development that has taken place over the years, McArthur says, "It's been born out of necessity more than anything else. My colleagues at other institutions where a January program came and went within five or six years reported that it was a bit too narrow to satisfy all the diverse interests." Colby's interim, on the other hand, "has been very broad, flexible, and

adaptable to change over time. I think that is really its strength."

An undergraduate liberal arts college in central Maine with approximately 1,650 students, Colby first conceived the idea of a January term in the late 1950s. Prompted by the awkwardness of a semester calendar that ran from mid-September to mid-January and from February through May, the college decided to investigate other calendar options. As McArthur explains, "The two weeks after Christmas vacation was perceived as a period of very low productivity since the rhythm of the semester had been broken."

Rejecting the trimester or quarter system because they had no interest in summer school, college administrators developed instead what has since become known as the 4-1-4 calendar, simultaneously pioneered, it was discovered later, by administrators at Eckerd College in Florida.

The plans for Colby's January Program were finalized in the summer of 1959, according to McArthur, when a group of faculty members from the college participated in a workshop at Colorado College, using the opportunity of the intensive small-group discussions for refining their idea.

Since there was a great deal of interest at Colby in independent study, the 4-1-4 calendar as it was first conceived was seen as "a marvelous opportunity to allow students to pursue some topic of their individual interest, and to allow faculty to be involved with students on a tutorial basis," McArthur says.

Thus, during the early 1960s, students were required to spend each January term on campus, moving through a graduated system that led from directed research to increasingly independent study. The program began by introducing freshmen to the research tools and techniques they would need to conduct their own studies, encouraging in subsequent years initiative and originality. Each year, half the faculty would participate as tutors while the other half went on leave during the month-long session to pursue their own research. Although the projects were mandatory, no grades or academic credit were given.

Continuing growth

Since such modest yet well-conceived beginnings, Colby's January Program has grown significantly, continuously responding to the changing needs of the campus community. The fascination of such a program for McArthur is "the extent to which it has provided Colby with a laboratory for curricular innovation." Every few years, features of the January Program find their way into the regular curriculum, McArthur notes, while parts of the regular curriculum in turn have become incorporated into the January Program.

After introducing independent study in the early 1960s, for example, the college subsequently offered the same program off-campus in 1968; internships were next. Consequently, the departments also began featuring independent study and internships during the semester in the late 1960s and early 1970s, respectively. Student-taught courses and team teaching followed the same co-optation pattern.

Each time an idea from the January Program moved into the curriculum, McArthur explains, the need to keep the January term in its current form became weaker because its format ceased to be so very different from what was possible during the regular semester.

While the January Program at Colby has undergone many changes, the original concepts of a 'change of pace' and 'single-minded pursuit' have been retained.

Thus it was that part of the regular curriculum began appearing in the January Program; by 1981, regular semester offerings, redesigned to fit the four-week format, were being given for credit and conventional grades. Furthermore, McArthur adds, students now are required to participate in only three January Programs, one of which must be in the freshman year. This change ensures that students, especially seniors, are not concocting bizarre proposals just to satisfy the requirements when all they are really interested in doing is using the time for job interviews or relaxation. Surprisingly, and encouragingly too, McArthur says, very few students—only 140 this past year—chose not to participate in the fourth year.

While the January Program at Colby has undergone many changes, the original concepts of a "change of pace" and "single-minded pursuit" have been retained, McArthur says.

As many as 300 to 400 students a year choose the independent study option, primarily in the sciences or the fine arts. Each is required to have a faculty tutor to oversee and evaluate his or her work.

Others may elect to do foreign study, travelling to the Mohave Desert or the Caribbean to complete a field ecology project, participating in a London Theater Program that takes in approximately 18 plays a session, or undertaking intensive language study.

But whatever study option a student may elect, McArthur notes, the depth of involvement allowed by the in-

tensive four-week format has a lot of appeal to students and faculty alike. Colby alumni responding to surveys almost unanimously mention the January Program when asked about their most memorable college experience, McArthur says. He feels it is because many students use that opportunity to concentrate on something they really enjoy. —*J.A.M.*

For more information, contact Robert P. McArthur, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty; Colby College; Waterville, ME 04901 (207/873-1131).

Illinois Wesleyan University

Clustering for creativity

Through an innovative approach to curricular organization called the cluster course concept, faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University have managed to keep down January term costs and decrease administrative red tape while promoting interdisciplinary learning.

A cluster, according to Jerry Israel, associate dean of the university, is three or more courses related by topic or theme. Professors with a common concern can group their classes together during the January session, Israel notes, "sharing resources and talent in an informal structure designed to increase the exposure of students to different ideas and different expertise."

Illinois Wesleyan, a small liberal arts school with 1,600 students in central Illinois, adopted the 4-1-4 calendar in the mid-1960s, requiring all students and faculty to participate. Administrators added the cluster course concept to their other January term offerings in 1983 after five years of thematic, schoolwide programming. The theme approach, according to Israel, had become bogged down by the tremendous orchestration and high costs entailed in getting as many people as possible to participate. While it was good because so many did get involved, he says, it created an enormous amount of "administrative hassle."

The appeal of the cluster course concept, on the other hand, is that "it doesn't need a lot of apparatus or administration to go along with it," Israel explains. "All you need are two or three faculty members willing to work together around a common concept."

In 1983, for example, Israel and two other faculty members combined their interests in and knowledge of corrections to produce a cluster dealing simultaneously with crisis intervention, criminology, and the Illinois prison system. Israel, an historian, and the head of the sociology department joined classes for a discussion on criminology theory. Israel shared some of his practical knowledge of the Illinois corrections system based on his experience of prison teaching, and included students from the other two classes on prison visits. Meanwhile, his students joined others in a course on dealing with crises, led by a psychiatric nurse, when they accompanied police and state troopers on their patrols. "The cluster makes it flexible," Israel says. "You can do what you want to do. The problem is when you start feeling that you have to do something to keep up with the other courses, as was often the case with the old themes."

In 1984, the focal point for the clusters was George Orwell. Faculty were asked by the administration to submit course proposals a year in advance; the responses were published, and faculty members grouped themselves. To further stimulate discussion and interaction among students in the dozen or so classes involved in the Orwell clusters, Israel says, all faculty teaching courses on Orwell assigned *1984* during the first week of classes. That enabled faculty to send students to hear what other professors were saying on the subject.

According to Israel, use of the cluster concept during the January term has been a very positive experience at Illinois Wesleyan. Courses offered as part of a cluster can be used in subsequent years with a different slant or emphasis, Israel notes. The burn-out that comes from teaching the same course year after year doesn't occur, and faculty are reinvigorated by the new aspect a subject might assume when paired with something new.

> ***'The entire university has to be committed to the January term.'***

Additionally, if someone has a course they want to teach, but which does not fit in with the theme that is being offered that year, they can simply form a different cluster. As Israel notes, there are no limits on the number of clusters that may be organized.

Because clusters develop at the faculty level instead of being set up by the administration as was the theme programming, Israel says, there is always a danger that in any given year "the chemistry" won't be there, and the clusters won't occur. Given the fact, however, that faculty are able to choose their subjects and group themselves, enthusiasm is sustained.

Many of the cluster courses have been approved by the faculty for general education credit. Requiring participation in the January term encourages students to view the

interim as a relevant part of their overall educational experience at Illinois Wesleyan, Israel notes. He doesn't feel that an optional January term works so effectively, noting that a half-empty campus does not provide the best chemistry.

"The entire university has to be committed to the January term," Israel feels, "It takes work, nurturing, and long-range planning." He recommends offering a variety of options for January term study, creating as few administrative barriers as possible, and delegating a committee or individual to oversee and direct the program.—*J.A.M.*

For more information, contact Jerry Israel, Associate Dean of the University; Illinois Wesleyan University; Bloomington, IL 61702 (309/556-3101).

Linfield College

Revitalizing the 4-1-4 calendar

Faced with dwindling enrollments in their Winter Block program in recent years, administrators at Linfield College in McMinnville, OR, had to choose between dropping their 10-year-old program or renewing their commitment to a January term through increased financial support and curricular changes. They chose to renew.

"Linfield has decided that making a significant investment in an invigorated 4-1-4 program is an educationally important thing to do at this time," notes Kenneth Goodrich, vice president for academic affairs and dean of faculty at Linfield, a small, liberal arts college of 1,100 students located 40 miles from Portland.

He cites the unique opportunity the one-month term provides for special activities and courses as the primary reason for the school's decision to continue supporting the interim schedule at a time when many schools have moved away from it. "Those who voted for it saw things they would like to do themselves or that their departments would like to do, or they took the broadest possible view and simply said, 'there are things that this college can offer to students that can't be done well at other times in the regular format.'"

One of the criticisms against the Winter Block, Goodrich explains, is that it had become a time for "business-as-usual," and did not take special advantage of the full-time, intensive format.

Winter Block at Linfield was never really part of the 4-1-4 movement, according to Goodrich, but rather part of a year-round operation plan for the college that also included two Summer Blocks. "The former president believed that the college should be going year-round, that the faculty should be teaching potentially in any one of the semesters or blocks, and that the whole student enrollment would therefore be spread over 12 months,"

'Linfield has decided that making a significant investment in an invigorated 4-1-4 program is an educationally important thing to do at this time.'

Goodrich explains. Thus, departments were required to offer regular departmental courses during the interims instead of encouraging professors to develop innovative or experimental courses. "That put a particular stamp on the Winter Block and also on the Summer Blocks," Goodrich notes. "It meant that there could not be special programs." Students received credit for participating, but attendance was not mandatory.

Another reason for the wane in interest in the Winter Block, according to Goodrich, is that it became more expensive for the students. Originally the plan called for a strongly discounted tuition charge, as well as reductions in room and board costs for the January term. Yet over the years, increased fees and decreased financial aid had made the program less attractive to students.

A curriculum committee chaired by Goodrich studied the program in 1984-85, pinpointing its strengths and weaknesses. The committee developed a proposal to reform the Winter Block, and during the fall of last year the faculty voted to adopt the new program next January.

Winter Term, as the new program is called, will confront two weak spots in the Winter Block program: costs and curriculum.

Students enrolled in the fall semester will not be required to pay additionally for participating in the Winter Term. Tuition rates at Linfield will be going up next year, and Goodrich says Winter Term costs have been included so that no special charges will have to be made. In effect, the session will be "prepaid." Thus, tuition for Winter Term will be incorporated into every students' costs instead of only affecting participants. Administrators hope this will increase the incentive for students to take part in the new program. They anticipate that approximately 800 students will enroll in the upcoming Winter Term, compared with 150 who participated in the 1986 Winter

Block. Attendance, however, still will not be mandatory.

Administrators are also trying to increase faculty incentives, Goodrich says, by offering extra pay for teaching in the Winter Term whenever faculty members are unable to fit additional teaching time into their regular course loads. Under the Winter Block schedule, faculty had to drop a course in a regular semester in order to teach during the interim. "There was a lot of resistance to that," Goodrich notes, because "people feel that they're working very hard and not teaching anything superfluous. When the president said he would definitely support the idea of paying faculty extra, I think that swung a number of people in favor of the program."

Winter Term offers range of special courses

While continuing to offer some regular departmental courses, the program will also feature a range of special courses. At least one course in each of the following categories will be offered annually: contemporary issues, cultural epochs, area studies, and off-campus study. The January 1987 course on contemporary issues will focus on human rights around the world, while cultural epochs—each year devoted to an interdisciplinary study of a period of human civilization—will feature "Human Values in the Classical World: Art and Society." Latin America and Southwest Asia are tentative selections for the area studies category.

Off-campus study includes courses abroad as well as in North America. Goodrich considers the travel courses an important component of the new Winter Term, one that will enhance and complement the international dimension Linfield has "self-consciously been trying to interject into almost everything it does."

To further encourage students to participate in the Winter Term travel programs, Linfield will subsidize transportation costs, just as it does for other study-abroad programs, thus making them accessible to the greatest number of students. Over the next five years, Goodrich says, Linfield hopes to boost its student participation in foreign study from 25 percent of the graduating class to 50 percent.

In addition to approximately 12 special courses being offered in the upcoming January program, there will be 35 regular departmental courses, some newly created for the Winter Term, as well as internships, practica, and one-credit activity programs in physical education or other fields.

New courses will have to be approved through an academic review process. According to Goodrich, faculty will have to address two questions when designing new courses: "How are you going to make use of this four-week period?" and "Why do you think the four-week, full-time format is appropriate for this kind of course?"

Certain courses will be less suited to the Winter Term format, Goodrich acknowledges. "I doubt whether any writing course will be offered, because the intensity of that activity for both the faculty member and the student means that it isn't going to work very well as a full-time academic activity for one month." Once the college has been through its first Winter Term, administrators plan to evaluate the experience, pinpointing the successes and the failures, and then develop guidelines for future course design. —*J.A.M.*

For more information, contact Kenneth Goodrich, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty; Linfield College; McMinnville, OR 97128 (503/472-4121).

McMurry College

Learning for its own sake

Unlike interim programs that are required for graduation, McMurry College's May Term is voluntary and gives students the option of taking nontraditional courses during a three-week summer session.

Approximately 25 May Term courses are offered each year at the Abilene, TX, college with selections including studies in entomology, Southern Gothic literature, and the history and culture of mathematics. Each May Term class is considered a full academic load, and students are permitted to register for only one, which they may use to satisfy curricular requirements. Students may apply up to three semester hours of May Term course work to major, minor, concentration, or core requirements, and up to nine hours toward a degree. According to the May Term philosophy, this program "enables students to explore and delve into disciplines in which they may have a compelling interest, but for which they may not have extensive preparation."

Says Gerald McDaniel, chair of McMurry's May Term/Special Program subcommittee, students participate in May Term because of their "love of learning." Out of a student population of 1,500, about 200 students register annually for May Term courses, and McDaniel asserts that the rigors of the program preclude any inclinations to view it as "play time." Declares McDaniel: "Students know that the May Term is demanding, so only the best participate. . . . It takes a serious-minded individual to attend three hours of class every day for three weeks."

Although McDaniel maintains that McMurry would probably "be better off financially" if it did not offer the May Term, the program is in no danger of being cancelled. "Over 90 percent of our faculty and students believe that May Term should be continued," he says. "We

feel that it is the finest component of our liberal arts tradition."

Monitored for quality

To ensure that May Term courses are academically substantive, a May Term subcommittee evaluates each new offering and requires potential May Term faculty participants to complete a course proposal form, detailing course content and objectives and including a tentative text list. After the May Term subcommittee has reviewed a course proposal, it is submitted to the members of the academic policy committee, who in turn route it to the general faculty for their assessment. "In this way, we carefully monitor the soundness of May Term courses," says McDaniel, who cannot recall a course ever being rejected. "The biggest problem faculty have in devising May Term courses is overzealousness," he says. The evaluation process helps them to pare down their objectives to a manageable number.

Students, too, may develop their own May Term courses, following the same procedures for approval. In addition, students may undertake directed studies, using the May Term for independent pursuit of a special interest.

'Students know that the May Term is demanding, so only the best participate....'

The interim term courses represent a variety of disciplines, from biology to business management and psychology to physical education; a number of them involve local travel, such as a geology field course to New Mexico. McDaniel emphasizes that all May Term offerings entail a high level of commitment from students, who are often required to augment or exhibit their subject knowledge by writing reports, making presentations, or attending labs, lectures, and cultural events. For example, the course objective for a May Term theater class is to have students develop a play for children, while geology students learn the art of mapping and field report-writing.

Not all May Term courses are as academically oriented, but McDaniel maintains that not all of a student's education comes from books, noting that health fitness is part of the core curriculum. When questioned about the academic validity of such May Term offerings as Nutrition in Athletics or Adult Fitness, McDaniel asserts: "Physical education activities are as important as classroom activities; not all May Term courses require written tests or essays because performance of a skill may be the desired end." He adds that such courses are fully in keeping with McMurry's tradition of cultivating "sound minds and sound bodies—a classical notion of education."

Students participating in May Term also may elect to take consortium courses at Abilene Christian or Hardin-Simmons universities, while students from these neighboring institutions attend McMurry. This, says McDaniel, provides an exchange of new ideas and pedagogical approaches, creating a kind of "mega-university" in a small school environment. —*N.M.L.*

For more information, contact Gerald McDaniel, May Term/Special Program Subcommittee Chair; McMurry College; McMurry Station; Abilene, TX 79697 (915/692-4130, ext. 2258).

Pacific Lutheran University

Interim: A time of exploration

Responding to the call of the times for nontraditional pedagogical approaches, Pacific Lutheran University adopted a 4-1-4 calendar in 1970, allowing students to dedicate themselves to the intense study of one topic during the month of January. And so it remains.

While noting that many colleges and universities are now moving back to the more conventional semester divisions, Interim Director Judith W. Carr sees Interim as an established outgrowth of PLU's liberal arts philosophy. "Students use the Interim to be brave and daring," says Carr. "It is their time to explore the unknown." She emphasizes that students are not allowed to take Interim courses to fulfill regular core requirements, maintaining that the Interim is intended to be an additional broadening experience.

While the amount of work involved varies from course to course, the majority of Interim classes require students to complete some sort of project, such as a journal, a case study, or oral presentation. The Interim catalogue defines the objectives of each course and summarizes the work expected. The description of a seminar on Christopher Marlowe, for example, informs students that they should expect to "spend a minimum of four hours each day working independently."

Interim courses are not available during the regular academic year, nor are they offered for more than two consecutive years in an effort to provide a dynamic selection. Students are required to complete two Interim courses (a total of eight semester hours) to graduate, although they may petition to take more if they maintain a 3.0 grade point average.

An Interim exchange program enables about 60 to 100 students from institutions throughout the US to attend the January term at PLU, while 40 to 60 PLU students likewise spend that semester on other campuses. Says Carr: "Our faculty favor the exchange because they like the infusion into class discussions of new ideas brought by exchange students from diverse institutions and geographic locations."

Interim courses are not available during the regular academic year, nor are they offered for more than two consecutive years in an effort to provide a dynamic selection.

To encourage students to enroll in courses they might otherwise avoid, the majority (70 percent) of Interim offerings are graded on a pass/no credit system. "This allows students to experiment without fear of failure," says Carr. While conceding that this grading system might be a signal for a few students to take a lackadaisical view of their Interim studies, Carr asserts that PLU faculty are so convinced of the Interim's academic merits that they are "willing to take that chance." She estimates that fully 70 percent of the faculty are strongly in favor of the Interim program.

Each year the Interim committee, composed of six faculty members and two students, selects a broad theme which sets the tone for the month's courses and extracurricular "enrichment" events. Carr stresses that faculty are not forced to base their instruction on the annual theme, though she notes it provides direction to many for enrichment activities and course design. The theme for 1986 was Global Visions, and the Interim catalogue stated, "As a liberal arts institution, Pacific Lutheran University is committed to building a greater understanding of the cultures and relationships that constitute the global village."

Though not all of the 110 Interim offerings were international in scope, several related to the theme, including such courses as "Perceptions of Far Eastern Art"; "Intensive French: An Introduction to the French Language and People"; "Solidarity—A View from the Inside"; and "International Management" (with special focus on the Far East). In addition, travel courses to Spain, London, Norway, Samoa, and New Zealand emphasized the theme. Not simply pleasure trips, these travel courses have an academic focus to which students must adhere, studying for example the economics of Norway, the art of Spain, or American authors in London.

Relating directly to each theme, enrichment activities provide students with a daily diet of lectures, films, and special events such as this year's International Food Fair. Carr believes that the extensiveness of PLU's enrichment activities is a major Interim asset, noting that "almost every day of the week we offer an event free-of-charge."

Supporting the Interim

Despite the fact that interterms have come under some criticism by the academic community in recent years, Carr maintains that the majority of students and faculty support Pacific Lutheran's Interim and the breadth of education it is designed to achieve. "There has been a swing back to the basics," says Carr, "and many students are now more mindful of quickly fulfilling their requirements so they can hurry out into the working world." In light of this new mind-set, she adds, many colleges are beginning to view interterms as nonessentials. Nevertheless, declares Carr, PLU is determined to continue its Interim because it is in keeping with the institution's commitment to the liberal arts. She believes there is widespread student support for interim programs, and notes that when the University of Puget Sound dropped its interim, many students came to PLU to take courses.

—*N.M.L.*

For more information, contact Judith W. Carr, Interim Director and Associate Dean for Special Academic Programs; Pacific Lutheran University; Tacoma, WA 98447 (206/535-7130).

Rollins College

Courses that enrich the curriculum

As the oldest institution of higher learning in Florida, Rollins College (established in 1885) has maintained an image of strong commitment to the liberal arts, and since the 1920s, has encouraged the ideals of progressive education. The Winter Term, initiated upon the adoption of a 4-1-4 calendar in the late 1960s, is "one contemporary expression of that tradition," writes Daniel R. DeNicola, vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty.

Located in Winter Park (near Orlando) in central Florida, Rollins is home to approximately 1,360 undergraduates, the majority of whom are enrolled in one of 26 liberal arts programs. In addition, the college offers special preprofessional programs in engineering and law and a five-year master's degree program through the

Crummer Graduate School of Business.

According to Associate Dean of the Faculty Patricia A. Lancaster, completion of three Winter Terms is required for graduation. Students have the option of taking one Winter Term off; many seniors do so in order to investigate job opportunities or graduate schools.

Approval of new Winter Term courses is contingent upon agreement by members of the curriculum committee, which oversees all course offerings at the college, or the special programs committee, which evaluates proposals for off-campus studies. Committee members expect to see courses that are "well-suited to the four-week period of the Winter Term," says Lancaster, in that they are "academically challenging." Winter Term offerings "are not simply an intensive version of something students can take in the fall or spring semesters," she adds; although there are a few courses that fit that description, such as "Introduction to Computing."

Students have the option of taking one Winter Term off; many seniors do so in order to investigate job opportunities or graduate schools.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the Winter Term, says Lancaster, is that of permitting faculty and students to delve into a topic of mutual interest without competition from other courses. Boasting a low student/faculty ratio of about 11 to 1, Rollins allows close interaction among class members during the Winter Term as well as in the regular semester.

Each year, about 10 percent of the student population opt for travel-study courses ranging from "An Anthropological Study of Mexico" to "The Culture of China: Past and Present," which were among the 1986 Winter Term off-campus offerings.

Leaving the classroom behind

Although a majority of the students remain in Winter Park during January, many of the on-campus courses incorporate field trips with classroom study. In fact, one of the more popular courses with students this past Winter Term, according to Lancaster, included one in environmental studies, "Islands in the Stream." Featuring excursions to some of the coastal regions and Florida Keys, the course presented an interdisciplinary study of the literature and natural history of these tropical islands in an effort to shed light on "the cultural and natural values enhanced by the protection of rare ecosystems," according to a course description.

Courses taught by visiting faculty from Australia and Ireland, where Rollins participates in fall term residential programs, as well as England, Spain, and other US colleges and universities, continue to enhance the learning environment on the campus during the Winter Term. Lancaster considers "Traditional Facies of Aboriginal Life," team-taught by an anthropologist and an aborigine from Australia, a unique offering. Lancaster adds that visiting faculty knowledgeable about Latin American and Caribbean affairs find strong student interest in their courses at Rollins.

A sidelight of Rollins's interterm is the "Winter Term with the Writers" program, a week-long series of lectures featuring literary figures. Sponsored by the English department, it has included such distinguished guests as Maya Angelou, Nikki Giovanni, and Robert Parker reading their works and participating in panel discussions. This past year, the college devoted its session to science fiction writers living in the central Florida region.

While many of the Winter Term offerings give students the option of registering for courses for a standard grade or credit/no credit, Lancaster emphasizes that most students prefer a letter grade because "they assume that by devoting themselves to a single course, chances are they will make a pretty good grade." In order to get credit for any course at Rollins, a grade of "C – " or better must be attained.

In Lancaster's opinion, Winter Term "gives us the opportunity to practice the type of education that Rollins does best. And that is close interaction between faculty and students in a small-class setting." Not only do the students benefit, she says, but faculty do as well in being able to offer very specialized courses and having the "opportunity to be innovative" in developing them.

—*L.M.N.*

For more information, contact Patricia A. Lancaster, Associate Dean of the Faculty and Professor of French; Rollins College; Winter Park, FL 32789-4499 (305/646-2280).

Samford University

Opportunity for diversity

The January Term was added to Samford University's schedule nearly 20 years ago and has since become "an integral part of the curriculum," according to Vice President for Academic Affairs Ruric E. Wheeler, fostering innovation in teaching techniques and learning modes.

The focus of the January Term has changed somewhat since its inception, mainly to reflect Samford's evolving institutional mission—from a Southern Baptist-affiliated, liberal arts college to a university supporting professional degree programs in business, education, law, music, nursing, and pharmacy.

While a majority of interterm offerings primarily serve the needs of arts and sciences majors at many colleges and universities operating on a 4-1-4 calendar, says Wheeler, Samford faculty members utilize the opportunities afforded in the January Term "to emphasize the liberal arts approach to education for the professional schools." This is significant considering the percentage of students enrolled in programs outside its College of Arts and Sciences. Although arts and sciences majors make up the largest group at about 35 percent of the student population, law school students number about 30 percent, business majors follow with an approximate 15 percent enrollment, and the remaining are equally distributed among the other schools.

Several of Samford's interim offerings emphasize the value of educating for an international perspective. Examples include the ongoing January Term in London; a 1982 travel-study course, "Amazon Rain Forest of South America"; and a 1983 mission-service trip to Nigeria. The January Term in London includes a selection of travel-study courses examining, among other things, a comparative cultures approach to learning. Operating under the auspices of the university's international programs, the London January experience incorporates excursions to sites relevant to the topic at hand with intensive background study on the Birmingham campus as well as at Samford's London Study Centre, which doubles as a small bed-and-breakfast hotel.

Involving faculty members from many of Samford's professional schools, courses offered in London in 1986 included "Philosophy and History of Biology," "Nursing in the British Isles," "English Religious Heritage," and "International Business."

Conducting class in exotic surroundings

Leaving traditional classroom boundaries behind, a group of ten Samford students and two professors trekked through the Amazon rain forests in January 1982. The backgrounds of class participants (half were biology majors; the other half, history majors) mirrored the interdisciplinary nature of the subject under study: how humans have altered the unique ecosystem of the rain forest to suit their needs and the subsequent impact on the worldwide balance of nature. Team-taught by a biology professor and a history professor, the course allowed students the opportunity for first-hand exploration of the Amazon.

The January 1984 mission trip to Nigeria involved 24 students and 4 faculty members in a mission devoted to learning about the role of Christianity in Nigerian culture. In "partnership" with Alabama and Nigerian Baptists, the class spent three weeks visiting various college campuses, hospitals, and other missions across the country.

While Samford requires only two January Term courses totaling six credits for graduation, says Roy S. Brigance, coordinator of the January Term, many students complete them by the end of their sophomore year and then take other courses of interest in their junior and senior years. Students may take only one course per January Term, and, in addition, have the option of completing courses for a letter grade or on a pass/fail basis.

Several of Samford's interim offerings emphasize the value of educating for an international perspective.

A number of the January offerings—such as "Voices of the Sixties," a 1986 speech course focusing on the events of the decade in connection with the rhetoric of the period's memorable speakers—would not hold up as a semester-long course, admits Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences Lee N. Allen. However, he adds, the January Term is meant to "provide an opportunity for a slightly different approach—both to learning and to subject matter—than appropriate for the regular semester."

—*L.M.N.*

For more information, contact Roy S. Brigance, January Term Coordinator; Samford University; Birmingham, AL 35229 (205/870-2718).